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NATHAN
BANGS
A. H. TUTTLE

A. J. Bell
Victoria College

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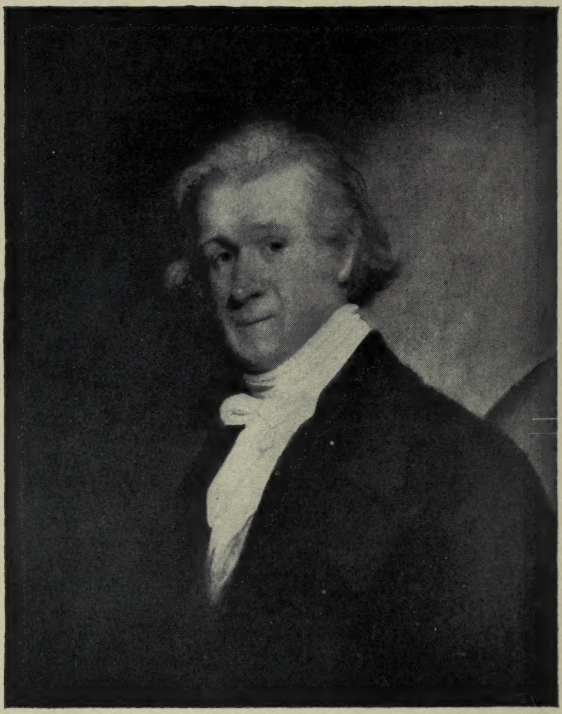

NATHAN BANGS

Nathan Bangs

By

A. H. TUTTLE

New York: EATON & MAINS
Cincinnati: JENNINGS & GRAHAM

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FOREWORD

In the preparation of this portraiture of Dr. Nathan Bangs I am embarrassed both by the magnitude of his personality and the abundance of the material at my command. How can I place so colossal a statue on so slender a pedestal, or how compress the story of a creative ministry of more than sixty active years in a little more than a hundred pages?

His writings alone would fill my shelves with books, the substance of which no miracle of mine can condense to a single volume. His deeds are great channels on which argosies float; for he was the called of God to create at a crisal period of his Church the means by which its evangelism could be more effectually conserved.

Above all, the man himself appalls me. He was an exceptional man endowed for an exceptional task. He combined opposite powers which usually exclude each other. With the meditative insight of the purest Mystic he united the severest judgment of the most subtle dialectician. To the most tender sensibilities, capable of the loftiest

emotional flights, he joined the coolest carefulness in the minutest details of administration. He could weep in sympathy, argue with icy chilliness, or thunder with judgment wrath.

Dr. Abel Stevens with rare genius has painted his full-length portrait and framed it in a volume of a hundred and forty thousand words. Who are we to paint his miniature? All that we can hope to do is to tell enough to awaken anew an interest in this superb man, and lead a later generation to a study of the larger works from which we have gathered our material.

CHAPTER I

A MAKER OF METHODISM

One of the most conspicuous figures of American Methodism during the first century of its history is that of Dr. Nathan Bangs. In the judgment of its ablest historians he ranks second only to Bishop Asbury among the makers of his Church. He was one of the most potent forces in shaping its policy at a time when the glowing itinerant evangelism had reached a period which demanded a more elaborate organization for the preservation of its unity and the multiplication of its usefulness.

In the early history of our Church in this country its organization was extremely simple and was directed mainly to secure the most effective evangelism. It was not burdened with a vast institutionalism, and its preachers went far and near calling men to repentance, gathering converts, erecting chapels, and organizing classes for the purpose of training its adherents in holiness. These classes were like so many springs

bubbling up in the wilderness. Their streams, uniting, swelled into a mighty flood. It soon became a serious question how to conserve this ever-increasing power and turn it to the largest effectiveness in the kingdom of God.

No one can doubt but that the mighty men who under the masterly leadership of Asbury brought about this stupendous result would have been equal to the new task. But under the providence of God this burden was to be laid on a younger generation, in the foremost ranks of which stood Nathan Bangs. He was born to this work. He certainly was fitted for it both by nature and by grace; and the events of his ministerial history seem to have been divinely directed to this end.

It was his privilege when but thirty years of age to be a member of the General Conference which assembled in Baltimore in 1808, which was destined to be remembered in history as second in importance only to the celebrated Christmas Conference of 1784 at which the Church was organized.

There were assembled at that Conference many of the mightiest men in the American pulpit. Among them were Bishop Asbury, William McKendree, Jesse Lee, Lovick

Pierce, Enoch George, Thomas Ware, Ezekiel Cooper, Daniel Ostrander, Freeborn Garrettson, Laban Clark, Martin Ruter, Elijah Hedding, Joshua Soule, and others able to keep step with this heroic company which God had raised up to meet a critical emergency in the religious history of our country.

Young Bangs was deeply moved by the spiritual might of these war-worn veterans; and he witnessed the "battle of the gods" over two of the most important matters that have decided the destiny of the Church. He heard the great debate over the adoption of the Restrictive Rules, which became a virtual constitution of the denomination, and also the debate which resulted in the establishment of a delegated General Conference. He says of it: "When the plan was first presented it encountered great opposition, and was rejected by a majority vote. I suppose some voted against it from a fear that, if adopted, they could never attend another General Conference, and others were jealous of their rights, fearing to intrust the affairs of the Church to so few hands; while some opposed it from opposition to Bishop Asbury, with whom it was a favorite measure, for, notwith-

standing his great merits, he had his enemies. Toward the close of the Conference, however, it was reported by a committee in a somewhat modified form, and adopted almost unanimously, and it has remained ever since the constitution of the Church. That it has been a means of preserving our doctrines and fundamental system I have no doubt, for had it not been adopted, with its Restrictive Rules, our doctrine, 'General Rules,' and episcopal government, together with the itinerancy, would have been liable to modifications which might have been fatal."

The Annual Conferences which he had attended kindled in him an enthusiasm for souls. This Conference awakened in him the genius of the statesman. He returned to his circuit with no less zeal for evangelism, but with a broader view of its possible scope and a profound conviction that this new power in the world could, by the construction of suitable machinery, manifold its beneficence and at the same time unify and conserve its energies. It seemed to him that Methodism was a newly created light blazing in upon a formless void, which it was the divine purpose to evolve into a perfect order. In all the successive steps

of that evolution he was one of its creative forces. At the close of his career there were but few, if any, of the organic features of the Methodist system that did not bear the impress of his hand.

His brethren immediately recognized him as a natural leader and elected him a delegate to the first delegated General Conference in 1812. And such was the commanding character of his services that they sent him to every subsequent session, with the single exception of the year 1848, down to 1856, when his advanced years demanded release from this grave responsibility.

A general statement of his most conspicuous services may incite an interest in the study of its details in the subsequent chapters of this book. It certainly should awaken a desire in every thoughtful reader's heart for a more intimate acquaintance with this providential man, and a curiosity to trace the process by which the God of the Church fitted him for the hour. He was as truly predestined to his place in the Church as were Wesley and Asbury; and not even they gave greater diligence to make their calling and election sure.

No one man prior to him did as much as he toward the awakening and elevation of

the intellectual life of the Church. He was the founder of the Conference course of study for its ministers, and was one of the organizers of its present system of educational institutions. He was selected by the electors of Wesleyan University as the most available man to succeed the illustrious Wilbur Fisk in the presidency.

He was the most prolific author the American Church had produced during the first century of its history. Aside from his editorial productions, which if collected would fill scores of volumes, he wrote many books, chiefly controversial and historical. His most pretentious work is his History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in four volumes. This work made him the recognized historian of the Church and will forever be the basis of all subsequent histories of the period it covers; for he has there collected the material at first hand from the original sources, and was himself an acknowledged leader in the story he records.

He was the founder of the periodical literature of the Church, was the first clerical editor of the Christian Advocate, the chief editor of the Methodist Magazine, and the first of the Quarterly Review.

He was for eight years the official head

of the Methodist Book Concern. When he took charge it was heavily burdened with debt; but he managed it with such wisdom as soon to remove its embarrassments, and laid a foundation for a business which has since surpassed that of any denominational publishing house in the country.

He is recognized as "the Father of the Methodist Missionary Society." He framed the original constitution and wrote the first "Circular Address" to the Church. For sixteen years he labored gratuitously for the society as one of its chief officers. He was its first corresponding secretary, and devoted to it the fullness of his strength at a time when his splendid powers were at their best.

In addition to all this Dr. Bangs was intensely interested and in no small measure active in every matter relating to connectional Methodism.

Notwithstanding his intense activity in the legislative and administrative work of the Church, he was by nature a profound Mystic of the Fletcher and Fénelon type and delighted in the study of the interior life. He was the controlling genius of the meetings held for many years in the home of Mrs. Phœbe Palmer, in New York city, for

the promotion of holiness. His habit of excessive introspection, and the exaggerated estimate he placed upon the feelings as an evidence of the Holy Spirit's work, may have given a personal coloring to this school of holiness; nevertheless his sterling common sense and his critical study of evidential values saved both him and his followers from those excesses which characterized the Pietists and Mystics of other schools. No one of his generation did more than he toward the promotion of genuine holiness in the Church to which he belonged.

Farther than any historian will ever be able to trace, his lofty ideals and the might of his spirit have gone into the making of the Church. The man is greater than his deeds, and the power of his life is pulsing in institutions and hearts where his name and his deeds are rarely mentioned.

CHAPTER II

IN PREPARATION

THE Bangs family in this country may boast that theirs is the bluest blood of the Puritan aristocracy. The first of their forefathers to arrive in America was Edward Bangs, who was one of the immortals who formed the Plymouth Colony. He came from England on the Anne, which landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in July, 1623, about two and a half years later than the Mayflower. He shared in the division of the land made by the colonists, and his name appears on the "Old Records." In 1644 he moved with his family to a place on Cape Cod which was afterward named Eastham.

From this vigorous root grew a family tree, one branch of which was destined to become famous in the annals of Methodism. The father of the Methodist family was Lemuel, who renounced his Puritan religious traditions, emigrated to Connecticut, and became an adherent of the Protestant Episcopal Church. He strongly antago-

nized the Methodist faith, yet lived to see seven of his children members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, four of whom were preachers. His son Rev. Heman Bangs describes him as a blacksmith by trade, far above the average of intelligence in the community, an omnivorous reader, a successful surveyor, and a school-teacher. He had been a commissary in the old French war and an adjutant in the patriot army in the War of the Revolution. His children used to sit at his feet for hours listening to his war stories and his graphic accounts of the Tories and the Cowboys. He was a man of independent judgment, as is seen in his change of church relations. He was bitterly opposed to the Methodist itinerants, and would not consent to hear them preach "because they were uneducated." His prejudices were finally overcome when his son Nathan came down from Canada a Methodist preacher.

Nathan was born in the town of Stratford, Connecticut, May 2, 1778. Four years later the family moved to Fairfield, near Bridgeport, where he lived till thirteen years of age. He speaks of the three most potent influences on his character during this period: the school with the Bible as his

text-book; the strong personality of his patriot father, who greatly relished a theological discussion with the village parson; and chiefly the sturdy character of his "resolute mother." He writes with grateful admiration of "her motherly tenderness, her skill in the management of her household, the enjoyments she provided for her large circle of children, the competence her economy secured to her humble home, and the matronly authority and firmness with which she governed it."

The increasing needs of a large family compelled Lemuel to seek for a new home in what was then known as the far West; and in 1791 he emigrated with his family to the interior of New York State, at the head of the Delaware River. They settled where now the beautiful town of Stamford lies among many fruitful farms. But at that time the country was a primeval wilderness on the remote frontier of civilization. Here they erected their humble log cabin and began a new chapter in their life story.

Dr. Bangs in his old age committed to manuscript the memories of these early days, and Dr. Abel Stevens has given them to the world in his elaborate work, The

Life and Times of Nathan Bangs. From these autobiographical sketches we are able to hear in his own words the story of the way he was led to the unique place he holds in the kingdom of God. He says: "We traveled a hundred and fifty miles on foot, with our knapsacks on our backs, and endured no small difficulties on the way, but safely arrived in what is now called Stamford, Delaware County, New York, in the autumn of 1791."

They found themselves in the primeval wilderness; and "went to work, preparing log cabins for the accommodation of the family during the winter, which was at hand." It was laborious work for boys, and they had hardly got one of their rude structures erected when it was destroyed by fire. "So all our labor," he writes, "was lost; and when we saw that we could do nothing to save it, we sat down and wept. There were a few scattered settlers in the region who sympathized with us, and, turning out, helped us to repair our loss; and soon my father arrived to cheer us with his presence. Still later came my mother, with the rest of the family, and we were all at last safely domiciled in our humble habitation. Being in a new country, hard labor was

necessary to make a living. Sometimes my father had to go twenty or thirty miles to obtain bread for us, and we learned thoroughly the hardships and privations incident to a pioneer life."

Four years the lad toiled on the farm by day and studied with ravenous appetite at night. When seventeen years old he became a private tutor in a Dutch family in Schoharie, New York. Squire Hardenburgh was a good type of the sturdy and thrifty Dutchmen who settled in Central New York during the Revolutionary period of our history, and who gave character to that portion of the State. He was an old-time Lutheran and conscientiously observed the forms of religion, but indulged in the careless practices of his forefathers in respect to drink and pleasure. He habitually had one of the children with folded hands "say grace" at every meal. He treated the young teacher with great respect, and made him feel perfectly at home in the family.

Although the people spoke the Dutch language among themselves, the most of them understood the English, which they invariably used in conversation when Bangs was present. He readily fell into the com-

mon practices of the community, and became excessively fond of dancing and indulged in what he afterward called their "frivolous amusements." After residing with this family four months he asked the Squire to give him a recommendation to teach school, which he readily and generously did.

He obtained a position as a teacher of a school near what is now the town of Roxbury, situated picturesquely in the valley through which the east branch of the Delaware flows, the forest-clad mountains rising on either side. The enthusiastic teacher was greatly moved by the majestic landscapes, and speaks of them with glowing speech, which leads us to suspect that under a different culture he would have become a poet of no mean order.

"I entered upon my duties with delight, and, as far as I could learn, discharged them to the satisfaction of my employers. But had my lot been cast among a different people I might have made considerable literary advancement. I hungered for knowledge, but the general ignorance of the settlers and the want of books deprived me almost entirely of the means of gratifying this taste. An intimacy, however, which I

formed with an intelligent young merchant, afforded us some opportunities of profitable and delightful intercourse, in reading and conversation, on subjects which came within our reach. We met together once a week and read and strove hard to understand Locke's Essay on the Understanding. Having learned the art of surveying, both theoretically and practically, from my father, who was county surveyor while he lived in Fairfield, Connecticut, I taught it to my friend, and we used to amuse ourselves at least with mathematical studies. But these advantages were more than counterbalanced by the evils with which I was surrounded. Dancing, card-playing, and gay associations with young people, and the almost universal custom of drinking ardent spirits, though seldom to excess, drove all serious thoughts from my mind.

"There was no regular worship yet in the settlement; but a Methodist itinerant occasionally reached us and gave us a sermon, and a small Methodist class met in the neighborhood. These people were considered by those with whom I associated as fanatics, and were treated with contempt. I would sometimes, however, go to hear their preacher, and I remember one Sabbath

morning I was sitting in the little assembly listening with much sobriety to the sermon, when a witty young man at my side, with whom I had been on a frolic a few evenings before, whispered in my ear a jocose allusion to the gay occasion, whereupon we both burst into an immoderate laugh, an irreverence which I never allowed myself to be guilty of willingly. The preacher stopped, stamped his foot, and said, 'There is no laughter in hell.' I was ashamed of my conduct; but it was only an example of the manners of the time in the treatment of the Methodists."

While at Roxbury he was stricken with a serious illness, and as soon as he was able returned to his home at Stamford to convalesce. "My conscience," he writes, "awoke; all the sins of my life seemed vividly brought to my recollection. Such was the weight of my guilt that I felt as if I should sink into perdition. For the first time in my life I began to call upon God; for though I had habitually used the prayers taught me in my childhood, I had never really prayed before."

But after his recovery he gradually fell into his old habits, and attempted to suppress his conviction of sin by entering with

increased zeal into the excesses of the dance and other frivolities of the neighborhood. But he could not altogether quench the Spirit of God, who was wooing and alarming and instructing him, unwilling to leave him to his evil course and the defeat of his divinely appointed destiny. "Though immersed in youthful gayeties and apparently cheerful, yet inwardly I felt such anguish as made me desire death. I often wished for some secluded spot in the desert where I might dwell in solitude and bemoan my sad state as a sinful man beyond the haunts of men. In my occasional meditative walks in the woods I felt the truth which Wordsworth puts in the mouth of the Wanderer:

"'He who by willful disesteem of life,
And proud insensibility of hope,
Affronts the eye of solitude, shall learn
That her wild nature can be terrible;
That neither she nor silence lacks the power
To avenge their own insulted majesty.'"

CHAPTER III

CONVERSION

It is interesting to follow the successive steps by which young Bangs was brought into the joy of conscious salvation chiefly through the instrumentality of a people he had been taught to despise. We have seen how his father when in New England refused to hear even the illustrious Jesse Lee preach because "Methodist preachers were uneducated." We heard Nathan's laughter at a Methodist service in Central New York. He relates how when on a sick-bed in Roxbury he in mockery imitated the impassioned prayer of an itinerant. Even in the painful struggle of his soul for light he purposely avoided as "dangerous fanatics" the Methodists who came within his reach. Shunning the very ones who could have led him into the truth of free grace and experimental religion, the travail of his soul in its new birth was painfully protracted over many months. He who was destined to be for more than fifty years a guide of intelligent minds through the mystery of their un-

folding spiritual life was in this way providentially qualified for his work. His journal indicates that he regarded the events of his outer life as significant only in their relation to his inner life. He rarely if ever relates an incident as having any interest aside from its bearing on his spiritual experience and work. Hence it is difficult to gather many details of his story prior to his conversion.

In the month of May, 1799, having just entered his twenty-first year, he resolved to accompany his brother-in-law, Seth Smith, into Upper Canada, where they purposed to make their home. His father presented him with his surveying instruments, thinking that he might possibly obtain employment with them in the new country. They traveled with an ox team and made slow progress over wretched roads through the recently and sparsely settled country. That journey made a profound impression on his sensitive mind. He speaks of the vernal scenery, the kaleidoscopic pictures along the streams and valleys, the night camps in the woods, the open-air life, with its keen appetite and exhilarating freshness, which relieved what otherwise would have been a tedious journey. Little

did he dream at the time of the meaning of that emigration to him. He was thinking of Canada; but God was even then leading him to a "city which hath foundations." His warm and passionate heart greatly relished the untamed nature into which he was moving; but little did he dream how those grand horizons, those mighty trees with their robust foliage, those living streams untainted by the refuse of civilization, and even the lonely and half-clad settlers he met along the way, were depositing in his soul materials to be used in the temple of God in a later day. They awakened passions, reveries, and longings; but he failed to perceive their significance and their bearing on his after life. The secret treasure silently accumulated in his heart; pearl after pearl was added to the mysterious casket which was to be opened in the future. Many years later in speaking of that journey he said: "I believe a good providence conducted my wayward feet thither for my own good; for here in the remote wilderness I was to find the light and peace which I had so long sought, and thence proclaim the same blessings through most of Upper Canada and in many parts of my own nation."

At Buffalo they found but two or three log huts occupied by some miserable people. They crossed over into Canada and traveled down to Niagara Falls. Not finding employment as a surveyor, he took a school in a Dutch neighborhood about ten miles from Newark, six miles from Niagara Falls. "The mournful thoughts that passed through my mind while wandering alone in the forests of this strange country I cannot well express. Sometimes I would seat myself in the solitary woods and bewail my condition till my heaving heart found relief in floods of tears. The best satisfaction I could find was in being alone, reading, praying, and meditating. On one thing I resolved: being now separated from my former associates, I determined not to entangle myself again in the vain pleasures of life. When not engaged in my school duties, reading the Bible and other good books, and secret prayer, occupied most of my time. This reading gave me more important knowledge than all the books I had ever read. In studying the New Testament light poured into my understanding through the agency of the Holy Spirit, as I now believe; and though the plan of salvation, by grace through faith, was not yet clearly

revealed to me, I saw myself a justly condemned sinner, and perceived the necessity of repentance, though I did not fully comprehend its nature. I was led to earnest prayer, in secret, for more light, and for deliverance from the difficulties under which I groaned."

It is singular how everything he tried in his search for relief only brought him into greater distress. He tells us how he went with his burden of soul to an Episcopal clergyman who came into the neighborhood, but found no help from him. "Though in holy orders he was a card-player and a drunkard, and performed the liturgical service with indecent haste, following it with a brief, rapid, and vapid prelection." He tried for a time to take refuge in the prevalent dogma that all was prearranged and finally fixed by God's decree, and so the responsibility of his salvation was shifted from his to the omnipotent will. But his good sense could not hold permanently to that fallacy, and his burden grew heavier day by day.

He sought an argument with a Methodist preacher who came in his way, hoping to ease his own conscience by defeating him in a wordy debate. But the itinerant an-

swered him only with the word of God and an appeal to his conscience, and Bangs was "pierced to the heart as with a dagger." Thus he went on stumbling over the truth and warring against his conscience.

At this critical time of his spiritual life he was providentially brought in close touch with the Methodists, whom he had so persistently avoided. He found himself a boarder in a Methodist family. While he was there, there came to that home a rugged, travel-worn itinerant evangelist whose glowing zeal for souls had led him to penetrate to this remote settlement. His name was James Coleman, who is described as "a man without great abilities, yet gifted in prayer, and so entirely a man of one aim and business as that great results attended his labors." "I recall him distinctly," wrote Dr. Bangs, after many years, "a man of small stature, piercing black eyes, an intelligent countenance; a good, devoted man. I often heard him preach, and was greatly pleased with his fervent manner. He frequently spoke to me about religion, though I did not open my heart to him. In his prayers he would mention me by name, with affectionate simplicity, which so affected me that I would weep like a child, and, when I

rose from my knees, would seek some secluded place to hide my emotions. I have indeed great reason to remember, with gratitude to God, the prayers and conversations of James Coleman. He was truly a man of God, and tenderly felt for the salvation of souls. He soon, however, left the country, to return no more. After his departure there were no preachers of the gospel near us, except the poor, drunken, card-playing minister of the Church of England, whom I sometimes heard mumble over his form of prayer so fast that I could scarcely understand a word of it, and then read his short manuscript sermon with the same indifference and haste."

Although he did not open his heart to Mr. Coleman, the words of the good man had made a deep impression on him, and when a few days later he was alone in the great forest he knelt in prayer. "Suddenly," he says, "I felt my burden removed. Filled with gratitude for God's long forbearance, I stood and silently adored. It was immediately suggested to my mind, 'What is this?' and answered, 'It is the love of God.' 'Are my sins forgiven?' Something seemed to answer, 'No.' I rejoiced, however, in God my Saviour, and a desire to immedi-

ately make known to some one my hopes and fears arose in my heart, but it was suggested, 'This will not be wise; you may be deceived; and a profession of religion may be followed with failure and disgrace.' I continued in this state, rejoicing in the goodness of God, about three days, when, in consequence of following the suggestion of my fears, and thereby failing of the sympathies and counsels of experienced Christians, doubt, darkness, and condemnation succeeded to the peace and illumination I had received. Although I was well assured that a great change had taken place in my whole moral being, yet I did not believe that I was fully justified in the sight of God, nor was the plan of salvation by grace, through faith, fully disclosed to my mind; yet I now think that if I had obeyed the voice of the Spirit by making known my condition to the people of God, I should even then have entered into the rest of faith."

A few days after this it was announced that two Methodist preachers would hold a quarterly meeting at the home of Christian Warner, near Saint David's, and such was Bangs's feeling that he resolved to divest himself of all prejudice and receive the

truth from whatsoever source it might come to his troubled soul.

The preachers who were to conduct the quarterly meeting were two notable men, Joseph Sawyer and Joseph Jewell. Sawyer preached the sermon. "In commenting on the passage, 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted,' he unfolded all the enigmas of my heart more fully than I could myself. I was powerfully affected and wept much. I was fully persuaded that he was a man of God and could show me the way of salvation. When the meeting concluded Mr. Warner invited me to dine at the house with the preachers. Though I was an entire stranger both to him and to them, I gladly assented, for I had an eager desire to converse with them. On the way I rode in company with Joseph Sawyer, who commenced a conversation with me on religion. For the first time in my life I fully disclosed the struggles of my mind, acknowledging my doubts, my fears, and my desires. He endeavored in the kindest manner to instruct and comfort me. At his request I accompanied him to his lodgings, and when I was about to depart we kneeled down and he prayed that God would comfort my soul and com-

mission me to preach the gospel. 'What does this mean?' I asked, for as to preaching the thought had never entered my mind."

Mr. Bangs's conversion and new mode of life, more especially his introduction of prayer in the school he taught, roused such a storm of opposition in the Dutch community as to force him to resign. He then openly joined the Methodists. He became a changed man, not only in his spirit, but in his social practices and even in his personal appearance. He had formerly freely participated with others in their amusements and was an enthusiastic dancer. These he abandoned, "for," he says, "the Holy Spirit had written the rules of the Methodist Discipline on my heart." He was at that time a strikingly handsome man: tall and slender, graceful in his manner, with the carriage of a gentleman born and bred. His complexion was clear with a flush of pink, his eyes deep set, his hair long and after the fashion of the time braided in a cue. Even Bishop Asbury a few years later said, "I knew the young maidens would be after him." But when he joined the Methodist Church he discarded his cue and his former fastidious

dress and adopted the plain garb of the people he had chosen.

"Having thus united myself with the people of God, it was now my principal concern to make sure work of my salvation. Though I had frequent manifestations of the grace of God, and could occasionally rejoice in him, I had not yet attained to a clear witness of my acceptance with him. The subject of religion engrossed my attention, and I sought every opportunity to converse with devout people on my state and prospects. Some said that they believed me to be already justified, while others exhorted me to be thankful for what I had received, and to persevere until I should find a satisfactory evidence of my acceptance with God. My prayer was for some miraculous, some physical manifestation of divine grace. It pleased the Lord to disappoint me in this respect, as in so many others. After struggling hard, praying much, reading the Holy Scriptures, fasting, and conversing with religious friends for some days, he showed to my mind a scene such as I had never fully seen before. All my past sins seemed pictured upon my memory; and the righteous law of God, so often broken by me, shone in overwhelming splendor before me;

I saw and acknowledged the justice of my condemnation. Christ was then exhibited to my mind as having 'fulfilled the law and made it honorable,' 'bearing my sins in his own body on the tree'; so that I, receiving him by faith, need not bear them any longer myself. This view humbled me to the dust. At the same time I felt a gracious power to rely upon his atoning merits by simple faith. Instantly I felt that my sins were canceled for Christ's sake, and the Spirit of God bore witness with mine that I was adopted into the family of his people."

CHAPTER IV

CALLED TO PREACH

THE Methodist Church has always insisted that the ministry is not a profession selected by the individual, but a vocation determined by the Holy Spirit. It has admitted to the ministerial ranks only those who avowed their conviction that they were called of God to this one work. Because of the endless variety in personal environment and the manifold diversities of individual mental life, the call rarely if ever comes to two men in exactly the same way. The Church therefore sets no rule to define the method of the Holy Spirit's operation, but satisfies itself of the genuineness of the call by subjecting the candidate to a threefold test of "gifts, grace, and usefulness." To some the call comes in childhood and long before any conscious spiritual awakening; with others it is coincident with conversion and grows clearer and stronger with every subsequent blessing. There are others whose call becomes unmistakable in the pressure of outer events which close

up all other avenues and leave open but one which is sure to lead to the sacred office.

Dr. Bangs gives us no intimation of any early premonition of his lifework. The first suggestion he had of any such possibility was when a penitent he knelt with Joseph Sawyer, in prayer for the pardon of his sins, and the evangelist startled him with the petition that God would commission him to preach the gospel. He tried to cast off the thought, but it would ever intrude itself upon him, and finally, in his conscious assurance of his sanctification, it came to him with such power as to elicit a full consent. That event is the Holy of Holies in the temple of his history, the innermost sanctuary in the august mystery of which no fellow mortal can possibly enter. We pause, then, to listen to him who comes from behind the sacred veil, and even while he speaks wonder if we fully understand the import of his words:

"The impression that I must preach beset me by night and by day; and frequently while walking in the forests texts of Scripture would be presented to my mind and their meaning unfolded. I found myself following out the train of their truth with

all my soul while my heart burned within me with a divine fervor.

"Joseph Sawyer, who received me into the Church and who had become as a father to me, frequently urged me to use what he called my 'gift' in public. Although I consented to lead a class, a few miles distant from my home, such was my timidity that the attempt was an entire failure. This induced me to doubt my capacity for any such public labors, and I hastily concluded that I would try no more.

"Soon after this failure I removed my lodgings to another place, and boarded with Christian Warner, my class leader, a man of sweet spirit, and for whom I shall ever entertain an ardent affection.

"As I went on in the observance of God's commands divine light shone more brightly upon my understanding, disclosing to me the remaining impurities of my nature. This gave me a more and more acute sense of my native depravity than I had ever had, so much so that doubts were sometimes excited in my inexperienced mind whether I had indeed been justified. And yet on mature reflection I could not question the reality of the change which the Spirit of God had wrought in my heart, for I felt

no condemnation for past sins and I was often blessed with great peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. My experience verified Saint Paul's description of a justified man: 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' My conscience was extremely tender, so that I could not neglect any known duty, as fasting, secret prayer, social or public worship in class meeting or the congregation, or exhorting others to flee the wrath to come, in doing which I enjoyed much inward comfort and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. But notwithstanding all this I felt such an exquisite sense of moral defect that I was led like Job to abhor myself as in dust and ashes. There was, however, a great difference between my present distress and my former sense of condemnation. Formerly I was condemned as a guilty sinner, and hardly dared to look up to God for mercy; now I felt reconciled to him, could pray in faith, and enjoyed peace, while a sweet compunction weighed me down at the footstool of divine mercy. I hated sin with a perfect hatred, and consequently felt an utter aversion to all its pleasures.

"In this temper I went struggling on for

some time, until, on the 6th of February, 1801, being that evening on a visit to a pious family with some Christian friends, we conversed till quite late on religious subjects, and then prayed, as was the Methodist custom; for Methodists in that day seldom parted from even their casual interviews without prayer. When we knelt, I felt an unusually earnest spirit of devotion. Mr. Warner first prayed, and, without rising, called upon me to pray. When I commenced, my emotions deepened, my desire for a pure heart became intense, and my faith grew stronger and stronger. My supplications were importunate, so that I know not how long I continued to pray. When I ceased, I sank down into an inexpressible calmness, as lying passive at the feet of God. I felt relieved and comforted, as though I had been 'cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.' I had no extraordinary rapture, no more than I had often experienced before, but such a sense of my own littleness that I thought, 'What a wonder is it that God condescends to notice me at all!' All my inward distress was gone. I could look up with a child-like composure and trust, and behold God as my heavenly Father.

"We stayed all night, and the next morning in family prayer I seemed surrounded with the divine glory. I certainly was filled at that time with the 'perfect love which casteth out fear,' for I had no fear of death or judgment.

"I here simply relate the facts as they occurred. The change in my nature was as evident to me as had been my justification. Whatever name others may attach to this gracious experience, I believe I was then sanctified by the Spirit of God mercifully given unto me. Having been made a partaker of this great blessing, the thought that I must preach the gospel recurred to my conscience with increased force; but being more deeply sensible than ever of my deficiency in the qualifications requisite for so responsible a work, I dared not yet to yield to the impression, though it followed me by day and by night. Nor did I open my mind to any one respecting it, lest it might be imputed to vanity or pride. I prayed much that God would show me plainly my duty. One day, as I was walking the road, in deep meditation upon this subject, a sudden ray of divine illumination struck my mind like a flash of lightning, accompanied with the words, 'I have anointed thee to

preach the gospel.' I sank to the ground, and cried out, 'Here am I!' "

That experience made him an ardent believer in the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification, of which we will have occasion to write more particularly when we consider the last decade of his life, a period in which he was released from the pressure of official duties and devoted his strength chiefly to its propagation. But no period of his life can be understood aside from this experience. He confessed that he did not always retain the clear evidence of it nor live in its full enjoyment, yet he never ceased to believe in it or advocate it. He said, "Whenever I recurred to it," which he habitually did in conversation, prayer, and preaching, "my heart was inflamed with divine love."

It was his favorite theme, and his every deed was saturated with its spirit. He took special delight in attending gatherings for prayer on the subject, and when in New York city presided for years over a large weekly assembly for its promotion. In all the relations of his life he carried with him this tabernacle of God. He was destined to be not only a preacher and pastor, but also a parliamentarian and administrator.

We will see him when secular responsibilities lay heavily upon him through long and weary months, and times when he stands in the arena of debate with furious knights rushing down upon him with glittering steel —times which seemingly exclude the devotional spirit and silent meditation. But wherever we approach him we scent the odor of incense which filled his garments before the altar of his God. What kind of an office is that where a few steps from you behind an open door you see an oratory where this man goes to consult with God before he is free to talk with you about bills of exchange, printing presses, and sales of books? But that was the character of his secular life. "Holiness unto the Lord" was written on the bells of his horses.

The conviction that he was called to preach, which came to him so clearly in his experience of sanctification, was soon confirmed by rapidly succeeding events which wrapped him about strand after strand, till he found himself in a web of influences which made it utterly impossible for him to turn to any other calling without defying what was plainly the providence of God. He like many another had serious misgivings. A natural diffidence is easily mis-

taken for the voice of the Spirit, and he is distressed by a painful conflict of duties. Like Gideon, he would ask of the Lord "a sign" in the realm of outer facts. The prayer was answered.

Mr. Sawyer came into the desert again, and finding Bangs wavering insisted on his preaching for him in a little society about fifteen miles away from his home. He consented, and after a protracted struggle with doubt and fear went to the pulpit with trepidation. "I no sooner opened my mouth than the Lord filled it with words and arguments; the Scriptures seemed like a fruitful field before me. The word of God was like fire in my bones, and its utterance was attended 'with the Holy Ghost and with power.' I felt as if I were in the very suburbs of the heavenly Jerusalem, and the people of God were refreshed as with new wine. The Lord indeed answered 'as by fire from heaven.'"

He thought that he would never have a doubt again after such an experience. But having accepted an invitation to preach near his sister's residence, Gideon's faith wavered and he asked another sign; and again the Lord granted his petition. "Soon after this time I had an appointment in the

neighborhood of my sister's residence. I was much perplexed for a text, and could find none that suited me. I finally concluded to abandon the thought of preaching and meet the people, sing, pray, exhort, and send them home. I went to the meeting with this determination. After rising from my knees I took up my little Bible, opened it, and the first words I saw I read, and the first thoughts that came to my mind I spoke, and thus I went on through a sermon. I doubt whether I have ever had greater liberty in preaching from that day to this; I was at no loss for ideas or words. I preached about three quarters of an hour. The text was, 'But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours' (Luke 20. 14). I have never preached on them since, nor do I remember how I then treated them. They were given to me, I believe, for the occasion, for the people appeared as if thunderstruck, and the effect was remarkable. I do not, however, record this fact as an example for others; thus used it would be abused; I consider it as a gracious and special condescension of God to my peculiar weakness."

After this Mr. Sawyer took him with him on a tour about the circuit and insisted on his taking considerable part both in preaching and exhortation. After one year of varying success and failure he was regularly licensed to preach in the month of August, 1801. He sold his "earthly belongings," including his surveyor's instruments, purchased a horse and saddlebags, and rode forth to his first circuit and a destiny larger than the golden dreams of his youth.

CHAPTER V

A FRONTIER ITINERANT

THE young preacher's first appointment was with William Anson on Niagara Circuit, which stretched from the head of Lake Ontario over the Grand River and included all that part of the territory known as Long Point which juts into Lake Erie. "The settlements were few, the roads were bad, and the fare very hard. It required six weeks of travel with daily preaching to supply the numerous appointments."

A year later (June, 1802) he was sent with Joseph Sawyer and Peter Vannest to the Bay of Quinte Circuit, a region which had been very generally evangelized and where the young itinerant came in close intimacy with the finest type of the old-time Methodist social life. The discipline of these two years under the oversight of Joseph Sawyer was for him a veritable school of the prophets, which qualified him as no academic training possibly could for what was to be his place in the Church. In later years he greatly deplored his want of

college privileges in his youth, but the probability is that the innate qualities of his intellect and spirit came to a more natural and beautiful development in the Canadian wilds than they could under a gentler but artificial environment. We do not know what kind of an edelweiss might be grown under glass roofs in Kew Gardens, but we are satisfied with that we find under the Alpine snows.

It was a school of hardship. Think of a circuit which required six weeks of weary travel to complete the round; a salary so small as barely to provide the simplest necessities, and rarely paid in full; lodgings in poverty-stricken log cabins with food of the coarsest kind; a constant compulsion of conscience to keep ever "moving on" until the head is sick and the heart faint and health gives way.

He started out on the seventh of October with Joseph Jewell, his presiding elder, for the Bay of Quinte Circuit. They had what he described as a terrible road to travel over, hills and creeks, through mud and water, but arrived at last in safety in Little York, now called Toronto. There he remained after the departure of his Elder; and after preaching for some time fell sick,

and "recovered only through the kind and skillful nursing and earnest prayers of the people to whom he was sent."

Again his duties brought him to a region where the typhus fever raged as an epidemic, and there he remained to minister to the dying until he himself was prostrated and brought near to the gates of death. "Most of those who saw me supposed that I could not live long, but God in mercy raised me up from the gates of death. O the goodness of God! the preciousness of the Lord Jesus! I saw in my extremity that there is 'no other name given among men' by which I could be saved 'but the name of Jesus Christ.' Nothing that I had ever said or done, not even my best works, though ever so sincere, nor even my faith or prayers, preaching, traveling, privations or sufferings, could justify me in the sight of God without Christ. But in that time of extremity I could say in true faith:

> "'Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
> My beauty are, my glorious dress;
> 'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
> With joy shall I lift up my head!'"

Bad as were the physical conditions of frontier ministerial life, the intellectual and moral were enough to test the courage of

the stoutest heart. Many of the frontiersmen had emigrated not for adventure, but in the spirit of enterprise and liberty. They were men of intense mentality who carried with them the traditions of their former homes. While they had not many books, the few they had were thoroughly read. What they lacked in breadth they made up in mental alertness. They delighted to hear the men who came with a message into their remote settlements, but always claimed the privilege of challenge and debate; and woe to the man who could not parry their thrusts. Dr. Bangs relates many instances of interruptions of his sermons with questions and arguments. What better school in forensics could he have who was destined to be one of the foremost ecclesiastical debaters of his generation?

Furthermore, conventional and moral restraints were very lax, and the settlers furiously resented criticism of their conduct. It was not an uncommon thing for them to maltreat the preachers. On one occasion the people of a settlement where Bangs had been preaching agreed that in whatever house he attempted to preach, the owner thereof should thrust him out and forbid his ever entering it again. The

Christian Guardian, of Canada, which relates the event in detail, adds: "This, however, was but the beginning. In the presence of all the people, the rejected minister of Christ, in the most solemn manner, followed the directions of the Saviour. Taking a handkerchief from his pocket, and raising first one foot and then the other, he wiped the dust from the soles of his shoes, which they had collected on the ground of W., declaring at the same time he did it as a testimony against them for refusing the message of salvation. This announcement was received with a shout of derision, and the itinerant took his departure from the dwelling, which was never again to be entered by the messenger of saving mercy."

On another occasion he was assaulted in the forest by three drunken men who were infuriated by his ministry of temperance. He escaped from them, but they followed him to the house where he was to preach and during the sermon thrust a whisky bottle into his face and cursed him with the "vilest Billingsgate."

More depressing than active opposition was frequent and protracted indifference. On one occasion, so meager had been the results of his ministry that he for a moment

lost his courage. The story has been so often and so variously related that we give it here as it was told by one who had it direct from his lips:

"This beginning of success lifted a weight from his diffident spirit. Before it occurred he had given way to despair, under a 'temptation of the devil,' as he believed. Seeing no immediate effect of his labors, he had begun to doubt his call to the ministry, and had resolved to return home and give up his 'license.' He had actually mounted his horse and was retracing his course, when, arriving at the Grand River, he found that a 'January thaw' had so broken up the ice as to render it impossible for him to cross, whether by a boat or on the ice itself. Thus providentially arrested, he returned despondent and confounded. A significant dream relieved him. He thought he was working with a pickax on the top of a basaltic rock. His muscular arm brought down stroke after stroke for hours; but the rock was hardly indented. He said to himself at last, 'It is useless; I will pick no more.' Suddenly a stranger of dignified mien stood by his side and spoke to him. 'You will pick no more?' 'No.' 'Were you not set to this task?' 'Yes.' 'And why

abandon it?' 'My work is vain; I make no impression on the rock.' Solemnly the stranger replied, 'What is that to you? Your duty is to pick, whether the rock yields or not. Your work is in your own hands; the result is not. Work on!' He resumed his task. The first blow was given with almost superhuman force, and the rock flew into a thousand pieces. He awoke, pursued his way back to Burford with fresh zeal and energy, and a great revival followed. From that day he never had even a 'temptation' to give up his commission."

In this period of his ministry Mr. Bangs had a mysterious and painful experience which he calls his "hour and power of darkness," and which has been the occasion of considerable discussion among his brethren. Many years later he recorded it in his journal in minute detail and explained it as "a temptation of the devil." Some explain it as a morbid reaction from excessive religious excitation. Others attribute it solely to some physiological law and having its cure only in the realm in which it originated, namely, the body.

It is not an uncommon experience. Luther, Bunyan, Cowper, Faber, nearly all the Mystics, whether Roman or Protestant,

who have attempted to disclose the mysteries of their soul's life, and multitudes of earnest men toiling in obscurity, have been surprised at what has seemed to them to be a withdrawal of the divine presence at the very moment of their largest usefulness. Out of a horror of an inexplainable desolation they have cried, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Dr. Bangs's account of his experience, aside from its biographical value, is interesting as a study in spiritual psychology.

He at the time was physically worn by excessive labors and wasted by frequent illness, and yet his conscience continued to lash his flesh to heavier tasks. His mind also had been strained to the limit of its tension, and his preaching every week day in addition to the several services on Sundays permitted no relaxation. Furthermore, he was given to microscopic introspection, morbidly testing the genuineness of his spiritual experiences by the character of his feelings. No Medusa face will turn a man's heart to stone more surely than his own if he contemplates it long enough.

The immediate occasion of his distressing experience was a little book published by an apostate Methodist in London, Lackington's

Memoirs, in which the author endeavors to explain his former religious experience and all Methodist revivals as "a morbid excitement of the imagination." This book came to the exhausted and inexperienced preacher as an irrefutable argument that shook his faith in the genuineness of his own experience. It is related that African porters, after an exhausting journey through the jungles, often contract a fever in which little things become enormously exaggerated in their mind, and they will climb over a straw as laboriously as over a wall. In the unhealthful tone of Mr. Bangs's mind a straw became a wall.

"I resolved to preach differently and conduct my meetings in more moderation. But the resolution filled me with dismay, and I sank confounded in an abyss of darkness, and began to fear that my own experience had been a delusion. Stopping for the night in a Christian family, I utterly failed in the domestic prayer. I retired to my bed in indescribable distress. My sleep was troubled with awful alarms. I dreamed that a throng of demons stared at me. When I saw them I exclaimed, 'I will not fear you. I know where to go for help.' But my prayers seemed like vapor and

utterly without meaning. I had no access to God. I ceased praying, and the phantoms drew closer around me. I began again to pray, but with the like effect. When I again ceased, the demons rushed at me with increased violence, and I awoke in intense agony. I could no longer rest in my bed, but instantly arose and fell on my knees, but, alas! the heavens seemed to be brass over my head. I sank into despair. I went downstairs. The woman of the house, who was a most amiable Christian, asked me what was the matter, for she perceived my agitation. Not being willing to trouble her mind with a recital of my distress, I evaded for some time a direct answer, but at last said, 'I believe there is no mercy for me.' I spent the night without sleep, sometimes lying on the floor, at others attempting to pray, but without success or hope of deliverance from my anguish. Such torment I am sure I could not have endured for many days; I thought that the lost could experience no greater misery. Frequently was I tempted to open my mouth in blasphemy against God, and to curse the Saviour of men. Which way to look for relief I knew not, for I thought God had deserted me, and I now believe that he gave me up to the

buffetings of the adversary of souls for my trial, but so far restrained his malice as not to permit him to destroy me."

On the ensuing Sabbath he had two appointments to preach. He went to them in deep anguish. While addressing the people his heart was "filled with horrors." "No one but God," he says, "or such as have had like trials, can conceive of my wretchedness. I could hardly stand up; I felt that I ought not to preach, being, as I feared, lost forever." After the service he appealed to an old local preacher, who was present, for counsel; but the good man could not comprehend the case, and left him more desolate than ever. The thought occurred to his own mind, however, that God was leaving him temporarily to his own weakness, to test him and teach him profitable lessons. This gave him a dim hope "that he would sooner or later deliver" him. He attempted to preach again the next day, but "stood before the people, trembling with despair." Soon after he met an "old experienced exhorter," who gave him some hopeful counsels, but could give him no effectual relief.

"On the next day," he says, "I returned to the place where I was first seized with

this horror, and having a prayer meeting appointed, I kneeled down and prayed for deliverance. God appeared in gracious power, dispelling the clouds which hung over my mind, removing my doubts and fears, and shining upon my soul with the brightness of his reconciled countenance. All within me rejoiced in God my Saviour. Never was the 'cooling water brook' more refreshing to a thirsty man than Christ was now to my panting heart."

CHAPTER VI

MISSIONARY TO CANADA

Dr. Bangs was destined to be "the Father of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church." It is an interesting and instructive study in the providence of God in individual life to trace the lines of his entire career, all converging to this supreme and crowning work. For it he was called, endowed, and trained; and to it he surrendered his will in every stage of its gradual unfolding, dedicating his natural gifts more and more to the task assigned him or renouncing them altogether, plucking out the eye and cutting off the right hand whenever they could not be brought into the service intrusted to him.

When he was a young man on the Niagara Circuit, enduring hardships which threatened and ultimately prostrated his health, he received a letter from a German Baptist who lived on the river Thames not far from Lake Saint Clair, imploring him to bring the message of life to a country

which was almost entirely without the gospel and in a most deplorably irreligious condition. The young evangelist took it for a Macedonian call and asked his presiding elder to give him authority to go to that distant field.

But the better judgment of his elder, who was also his spiritual father, prevailed. He was wise enough to know that an enthusiasm for martyrdom is not to be mistaken for zeal for souls. Sacrifice when conscious of itself loses much of its moral force and is apt to give way under the weary monotony of daily privations. A spirit that could be rapturous in the flames of the stake may break down completely under a daily crust of bread and a nightly bed of straw. Mr. Sawyer insisted that Bangs should remain within the sphere of Christian civilization until enthusiasm had been tempered by experience. He sent him eastward to the Bay of Quinte rather than westward to Lake Saint Clair.

But his missionary zeal could not be suppressed, and every day he prayed in secret for those in the gospelless wilderness. He dreamed of them, he talked of them, and when lying ill at Quinte, upon what he and his friends thought to be his deathbed, he

willed his little all "to any preacher who would go to that suffering people."

After his admission into the Conference in 1804 and his ordination as deacon, he requested Bishop Asbury to send him to western Canada as a missionary. He tells us how the venerable bishop gazed upon him with an enthusiasm kindled by his own, and unhesitatingly said, "You shall go, my son." Asbury brought his case before the Conference, and, contrary to the usual custom, which required a deacon to remain two years before receiving the second order, ordained him an elder, that he might be authorized to administer the sacraments.

That is a charming picture we have of the olden times, the heroic days of our Methodism, when the young itinerant mounted his horse and started for his distant mission. Six hundred miles stretched between him and his appointment. There were no railroads; the coaches were few and rolled their way for the most part over wretched roads, often mud deep to the hubs. He had but fifteen dollars in his pocket, and many days must pass before he could possibly enter his own territory. And when he shall reach it there is no chapel for him nor a single Methodist home to give

him welcome. He will soon reach a place where there is hardly a semblance of a road to guide him. He must find the trail through dense forests and feel his path over flooded fields. Prophets of evil will haunt his steps, and he will suffer the perils of "false brethren." But he fearlessly follows the lure of his star which glows over distant Canada.

The soul has its native country as has the body. Many feel themselves alien in the land of their birth and long for a different mental tone and spiritual atmosphere, a land in which the soul was born. To Bangs that was Canada; particularly that portion of it that was in sorest need of the gospel.

He entered Canada by way of Kingston, then went up the shore of Lake Ontario, preaching as he went, until he reached Niagara. By that time his money was all expended and he had about eighty miles yet to go before he reached the nearest point of his destined field. He went on to the most westernly bounds of the Niagara Circuit, where he lodged. "My bed," says he, "was a bundle of straw and my supper mush and milk." At break of day he started for a ride of forty-five miles through

the primeval wilderness, with no roads and with only blazed trees to guide him. Here is a page from his journal:

"There being not even a beaten path, we were often at a loss to know whether we were right or wrong; but we got safely through at last. The flies and mosquitoes were so troublesome that our horses could not stand to eat, though we stopped in a shady meadow for that purpose; we therefore rode through the woods without any other refreshment for them than what they nibbled as we passed along. As for ourselves, we had a little Indian bread and dried beef in our pockets, of which we partook; but the water we occasionally met looked so black that we dare not drink it. Our horses seemed as eager to get through as ourselves, for whenever practicable they would trot on with all their speed. We arrived about sunset, weary, hungry, and thirsty, at a small log hut inhabited by a Frenchman. My tired horse lay down as soon as the saddle and bridle were taken off. I asked the woman of the cabin if she could give me a drink of tea, but she had none. Being almost famished, I requested the man to procure us some water, which we sipped a little at a time, as if it were

nectar; we then ate some Indian pudding and milk, the best food we could obtain. After praying with the family, we lay down on a bundle of straw, slept sweetly, and rose in the morning much refreshed and invigorated in body and mind. The poor woman was so kind as to send early to a distant neighbor, to beg some tea for us. But she had neither teakettle, teapot, nor teacup; she therefore boiled it in a 'dish-kettle' and then poured it into a tin cup, from which we drank it with more relish than ever a king drank wine from a golden goblet. I thought it the most refreshing beverage I had ever drunk."

He reached an Indian village on the Thames River where was a Moravian mission. Here he was hospitably entertained, and, finding a man who lived some miles farther westward, he by tactful methods induced him to prepare the way for preaching at his home on the following day. After this manner he sent his messengers before him, following them with the gospel until he came to Detroit. A local preacher by the name of Freeman had preached there in 1803, but there was no Methodist society when Bangs arrived in 1804. From Detroit he went to Fort Malden and completed

his circuit among the settlements along the shore of Lake Erie. He says: "A more destitute region I have never seen. Young people had arrived at the age of sixteen who had never heard preaching. But, although the people generally were extremely ignorant of spiritual things, and very loose in their morals, they seemed ripe for the gospel, and received and treated God's messenger with great attention and kindness. They treated me as an angel of God; and as Saint Paul said, respecting the Galatians, it seemed as if they would willingly have plucked out their own eyes and given them to me if it could have added anything to my comfort."

After traveling the circuit for several months he was stricken with what was called the Lake fever, and as soon as possible started for Niagara with the purpose of trying to persuade some of the local preachers for Christ' sake to move to this region and plant the Church there.

April 27, 1806, he was married to Miss Mary Bolton, of Edwardsburgh, Upper Canada. This beautiful girl was destined to be his companion through all his subsequent ministry. She bore him eleven children, six sons and five daughters.

Seven of them lived to cheer the golden wedding day of their revered parents.

At the Conference which met in New York city the following month he was assigned to Quebec. This appointment was given him at his own request. He wished to sound the trumpet of a free salvation in the unexplored regions of Lower Canada. He had a wife to maintain and but eighty dollars in his purse; and a second time he was to go to a field where were no Methodist chapels. But his faith never faltered. After a somewhat devious route he reached his destination entirely alone. He says: "As I entered the city I felt lost as in a desert. I had a few names of persons on whom I called and made known the object of my visit; they received me kindly, and assisted me to obtain a place for preaching, though I had to do much of this preliminary work myself. As I arrived on Saturday morning, I was desirous to begin my mission on Sabbath; I bestirred myself, therefore, and on the next morning had a tolerable congregation, and preached with considerable liberty. After preaching a few times, such were the encouraging signs that I hired a more eligible room for our meetings. At this time the prospect was quite flattering,

the congregation was large, and several persons appeared remarkably friendly; but little did I anticipate what was before me."

But he was in the heart of French Romanism. The alert mind of the French, curious as were the men of Athens for "some new thing," would as quickly weary of it. His promising congregations dwindled to a half dozen persons. "It seemed impossible," he says, "for me to bear up under my trials. I could endure opposition, and had been tested in this respect; but to see no result of my labors, to be simply let alone by the great population around me, was insupportable. My mind at times sunk into the deepest despondence. My only relief was in prayer and preaching, for then I forgot my desolation. My money expended, my congregation almost annihilated, among strangers, and fearing the cause I represented would be disgraced by my failure, I could only hide myself in God."

His eighty dollars were all expended, and he was embarrassed to pay for the smallest services. He speaks of having to borrow one dollar and a half to pay for wood, and again he borrowed a shilling to buy some milk. "But," he adds, "behold the goodness of God! When he had suffi-

ciently humbled me to depend entirely on himself, he sent me help in a way I little expected."

It is foreign to the purpose of this portraiture to outline the history of Methodism in Canada, but the name of Nathan Bangs is deeply graven upon its foundation stones. It was in that country that he was born of the Spirit. There he began his ministry and there he found his wife. The historian of American Methodism says of him:

"He had traversed Upper Canada thundering, a Boanerges, through its forests and along its scattered settlements. He was the founder of Methodism in many of its localities where it has continued to flourish, and where, before his death, it had become the dominant form of religion, and had intrenched itself in commodious, in some instances in stately, chapels. He may be called its founder in Quebec. Canadian Methodism must ever recognize Nathan Bangs as among its chief founders, and the flourishing Methodist communities of Quebec and Montreal, as they catch the glimpses of their incipient history, from the record of his sufferings and struggles, may well exclaim, 'What hath God wrought!'"

It was but natural many years later, when

Canadian Methodism separated from the mother Church, that it should invite him to become its first bishop. Since his death a Canadian paper editorially remarked, "To this day Indian tribes in Canada talk of their 'Good Father, missionary Bangs,' and white residents cherish his name with reverent regard."

But what concerns us more particularly here is not the impression he made upon Canada, but the impression Canada made upon him. Those seven years of immeasurable sacrifices and suffering were a part of the plan of God to qualify this man for what was to be his monumental work, the organization of the most powerful Methodist institution for the propagation of the gospel to the ends of the earth. The Greeks had a fancy that the clay out of which man was made was moistened not with water, but with tears. Out of those nights of bitter tears in Canada came our Missionary Society.

CHAPTER VII

PREACHER AND AUTHOR

Dr. Bangs believed that the divinely appointed means of saving men was through the preaching of the gospel, and that the supreme work of the minister was to preach. During the seven years of his ministry in Canada he threw himself into this one work with an abandon that prostrated his health and permanently impaired his voice. After his return to the States he cultivated a self-restraint in the pulpit which greatly added to his efficiency, giving a reserve of strength which was itself a power, and which enabled him at the suitable moment to roll it forth with a fury that was overwhelming. It was not an uncommon thing for men to fall prostrate under the force of his argument and exhortation, and occasionally his hearers would spring to their feet shouting for very joy.

Most of his ministerial life was spent in the pastorate and presiding eldership in New York city and in charges now embraced in the Troy, New York, and New

York East Conferences. His brother Heman says: "He was esteemed a powerful preacher. I remember that at a quarterly meeting, after the presiding elder had preached, he rose and began to exhort; in a few moments the power of his word was like an electrical shock, and the whole assembly rose simultaneously to their feet."

Bishop Janes said: "His sermons were sound in doctrine, sententious in style, affectionate in spirit, and direct and pungent in application. In his advanced age they were less energetic in manner, but equally edifying."

Dr. Samuel Luckey speaks of him as "a man of mark among his brethren—not an elocutionist, not equal to others in rhetorical or oratorical attractions in the pulpit, but preëminent for the vigor and breadth of his mind and the intellectual power of his preaching. It showed, to the more discriminating portion of his hearers, a peculiarity in the character of the preacher's mind by which he was distinguished from all others about him, and indicated eminence in his work as a minister. His mind was evidently accustomed to elaborate thought. His mode of preaching was scarcely known among Methodist preachers before his day, and

was, in the estimation of his best hearers, an indication of that originality and independence of mind which, in a young man, promises distinction. And there was a something about him—a moral and mental superiority—which impressed all observers that he was to be a prince and a great man in Israel."

Dr. Stevens says: "If not intellectually polished, he was intellectually powerful; a certain mightiness of thought and feeling bore down at times all before him, especially when he preached to large assemblies at quarterly and camp meetings. At one of the latter it was estimated that two hundred hearers were awakened under a single sermon; they fell, like wounded men, on the right and on the left; he preached on for two hours; and it is said that an earthquake, shaking the camp throughout those awful hours, could hardly have produced a more irresistible excitement."

In 1820 he became Agent of the Methodist Book Concern, and for over twenty successive years was burdened with the minute cares of secretarial and editorial offices. It has often been charged that officialism in the Methodist Episcopal Church is the ruin of pulpit power. Har-

nessed to the plow Pegasus trails his plumes in the dust. Who can rise to spiritual heights on the wings of the ledger and the law book? The greatest pulpit efficiency comes of personal contact with men in the pastoral relation and from undistracted brooding in the deep silences of the study. An office may release the preacher from the constant call of "next Sunday" and give him an opportunity to elaborate and polish a great discourse, but even it oft-repeated is apt to get the metallic ring of a recitation, and sometimes to emit the odor of decay.

Our fathers intuitively recognized this fact, and for a time insisted that its officers retain a pastorate. Dr. Bangs for many years of his official incumbency held a pastoral charge. His cotemporaries, however, recognized but little abatement in the quality of his sermons. They were probably less evangelistic than formerly, and more generally directed to the edification of believers, but they never lost the profound impressiveness of his strong spirituality. His ablest discourses were directed against the current doctrinal errors, such as Antinomian Calvinism, Universalism, and infidelity; but they were always pervaded with

the devotional spirit that characterized the daily life of the preacher. They were always persuasive, and often rich with melting pathos.

The Doctor believed that, next to preaching, the most efficient means for the spread of the gospel was the press. With this conviction he became the most industrious and prolific writer that American Methodism had produced. He began his career as an author as early as 1809 with a volume on "Christianism," a vigorous polemic on the divinity of Christ in opposition to an heretical sect that had arisen in New England and had arrogantly assumed the name Christian. From that time his pen was never idle. He also published two apologetic works in defense of the Arminian doctrine: Errors of Hopkinsianism, and Predestination Examined. In addition to these he himself enumerates the list of his publications thus: 1818, Reformer Reformed; 1820, Vindication of Methodist Episcopacy; 1829, Life of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson; 1832, History of Missions; 1835, Letters to a Young Preacher; 1836, The Original Church of Christ; 1839, The first volume of the History of the Methodist Episcopal Church; 1841, The

fourth and last volume of the History of the Methodist Episcopal Church; 1848, Emancipation; 1850, The State and Responsibility of the Methodist Episcopal Church; 1851, Letters on Sanctification; A Life of Arminius. He also published several sermons and pamphlets on various subjects. His life of Freeborn Garrettson Dr. McClintock pronounces "one of the best of our biographies, and an essential collection of data for the history of the Church."

His History of the Methodist Episcopal Church is his monumental work, and deserves special consideration. The General Conference of 1812 appointed him chairman of a committee to collect the historical materials of the denomination. From that time he began the laborious task which continued over twenty-five years "in perplexing, wearisome research in manuscript documents, in periodical publications, in scattered meager books of biography, journals of ministerial travel, controversial pamphlets, in Minutes of Conferences for sixty-five years, in personal, local manuscript data procured by correspondence from all parts of the country."

After he had labored upon this work for twelve years and had brought the narra-

tive down to 1810, his papers were all consumed in the great fire that destroyed the Book Concern. He boldly began the task anew, and after years of astonishing industry re-collected his material. Then came the more serious work to bring an orderly system out of this multitudinous matter. There was nothing of the kind in our denominational literature to give him any assistance. Lee's history was before him, but was of little historical value. He soon saw that his work must be mainly the collection of material for later literary sculptors to shape in artistic form, and for profounder critical minds to trace their philosophical relations. He aimed primarily to give to the Church an authoritative compilation of the most important documents and facts that have entered into its early history. But he did more than that. He could not resist the impulse of his genius, and filled his work with arguments in support of the doctrines and usages of Methodism and graphic sketches of its leading men and sage remarks upon the causes of their success. Thus he makes what otherwise would be a dull array of facts throb with the life of the period. He says: "The principal business of the his-

torian is to record the facts as he finds them without disguise or coloring, whether he can account for them or not. I might have conjured up a thousand fanciful theories to account for the success and influence of Methodism without ascribing to it its true original cause, namely, *the divine agency.* This, however, I dare not do."

But if it be true as he thought, that by the philosophy of history is meant an attempt to show the aptitude of the means which divine wisdom saw fit to employ in order to produce the desired results, and the suitableness of the instruments and their plans of operation to the condition of human society, then it must be conceded that his work is indeed philosophical. Dr. Stevens, whose artistic and philosophical genius in historical work is unquestioned, says: "As an historian of the Church he will be immortal; he must forever be acknowledged as the principal authority of all future historical writers on American Methodism."

In addition to all his published volumes is his editorial matter, which if compiled would make scores of stately books. In 1826 the Christian Advocate was established, and for two years he furnished

most of its editorial matter. From 1820 to 1828 he was also editor of the Methodist Magazine. From 1828 to 1832 he was the editor of the Advocate. In 1832 he was made editor of the Quarterly Review, and continued in that responsible office till 1836, when he was elected corresponding secretary of the Missionary Society.

During all that time he also held the responsible office of agent of the Book Concern. Amid such multiplied and incompatible duties, and in the oppressive weariness that must come to an overloaded mind, he could hardly reach a literary style that would command the applause of the Academy. His style is colloquial speech put to paper. He simply "talked right on." He had no time to beat his gold in every line of his die; but still he gave us gold. Oftentimes we have rare gems, but they are in the rough. His writing is extemporaneous, not always accurate, yet usually characterized by rugged strength. Let him who wishes to breathe the vital atmosphere of the Methodism of seventy-five years ago read Bangs's editorials.

CHAPTER VIII

BOOK AGENT

THE seed from which the several gigantic publishing houses of American Methodism have grown was planted by Robert Williams, who came to this country from England with authority from John Wesley to preach the gospel here under the direction of the regularly commissioned missionaries, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor. His zeal outran their movements, and he arrived in New York city early in 1769 and immediately began a work which he continued with great success until his death in 1775. He is described as "the Apostle of Methodism in the South." One of the stars in the crown of his rejoicing is the famous Jesse Lee, the founder of Methodism in New England. If the outcome of that fact is incalculable, what may be said of that other act of his, so insignificant in its beginning, but which ultimately led to the establishment of the Methodist Book Concern?

He published Wesley's sermons and other

works and circulated them through the country, as Bishop Asbury said in his funeral eulogium, "to the great advantage of religion—they opened the way in many places for our preachers, where these had never been before." At the Conference which met in Philadelphia in 1773 it was decided that "notwithstanding the good that had been done by the circulation of the books, it now became necessary for all the preachers to be united in the same course of printing and selling our books, so that the profits arising therefrom might be divided among them or applied to some charitable purpose."

From this time the making and use of books was a subject of serious consideration by the successive Conferences. We find in the early Minutes such rules as the following laid down for the ministers: "Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. Steadily spend all the morning in this employ." "Take care that all the large societies provide Mr. Wesley's works for the use of the preachers." "Print nothing without the approbation of one or the other of the superintendents." The preachers were also exhorted to circulate the works which were

approved by the authority of the Conference, and there was frequent discussion as to the use of the profits of the sales until 1787, when it was definitely stated that "all profits of the sale of books shall be appropriated to the college, the preachers' fund, deficiencies of preachers, distant missions, and debts on the churches." It may be presumed that there must have been a considerable sum of money, for the Conference to consider it worth its while to distribute it among so many and such important objects.

A cotemporary historian says: "From this time we began to publish more of our own books than we had ever before, and a principal part of the printing business was carried on in New York" (Lee).

Thus there had gradually grown from Williams's first thought an actual "agency" of considerable importance, though as yet it was without an official agent or even a name. It awaited a man who could appreciate the situation, with a courage that could seize the opportunity and a skill that could give it "habitation and a name." That man was John Dickins. He was an Englishman of education who had studied at Eton College and emigrated to America

before the Revolution. He became a distinguished preacher among the Methodists in this country and was a chief promoter of their first institution of learning, Cokesbury College. He was one of the ablest of the early preachers, but will be remembered chiefly as the founder of one of the most potent institutions of the Church, the Book Concern. In 1789 he was appointed "book steward."

The formation of this new instrument for soul-saving—for that was its avowed purpose—was a matter of grave concern, so grave, indeed, as to stamp the very name that expressed the anxiety upon the agency itself. The project did not meet with universal approval. There were many who feared that it would entangle the Church in worldly affairs to such a degree as to weaken its spiritual effectiveness. Besides that, they were without capital, and a minister's chief business was to preach the gospel.

But Dickins was equal to the emergency. He himself loaned the Church six hundred dollars, which was the total capital for the venture, and he continued the pastorate in Philadelphia, which thus became the seat of the publishing interests.

Mr. Dickins died in 1798, and the following year Bishop Asbury appointed Ezekiel Cooper book agent. He administered the office with great skill till 1808, when he resigned, leaving it with a capital stock of nearly forty-five thousand dollars. In 1804 the Concern was removed from Philadelphia to New York, and John Wilson was made assistant. On the retirement of Ezekiel Cooper, Mr. Wilson was made principal, with Daniel Hitt as assistant editor and book steward. In 1808 Daniel Hitt and Thomas Ware were agents, and in 1816 they were succeeded by Joshua Soule and Thomas Mason.

The General Conference of 1820 established a branch office in Cincinnati and placed Martin Ruter in charge. Dr. Bangs was made principal agent in New York, with Thomas Mason as assistant. The Doctor at that time was apparently the most opportune man for the office within the bounds of the Church. Though but little over forty years of age, he was already distinguished for his literary work, having published several volumes, apologetic and biographical, which had a considerable sale throughout the denomination. By the authority of the General Conference, he for

eight years had been collecting materials for a History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and it was generally known that he had finished in manuscript a "Defense of the Methodist Episcopacy," which he expected to publish at once. Furthermore, he had taken a strong stand for the elevation of the educational standard of the ministry. He was determined to remove all ground for the charge he had so often heard in his New England home, "The Methodist preachers are an ignorant set." For this reason he had been pressing hard for a wider circulation of Methodist literature. His zeal in this particular led him to differ from the saintly Bishop Asbury, whom he dearly loved. He said: "There are two particulars in which I always thought Bishop Asbury erred. I speak indeed with great deference when I presume to differ from such a man, for I cannot but feel a profound veneration for his character. I think, however, that he showed not enough interest for the intellectual improvement of the preachers and too great a solicitude to keep them poor. That these are faults in his administration I think all who witnessed it must allow. But he knew well the history of the Church

and knew that wealth and science 'falsely so called' had corrupted it, and he feared their influence on Methodism."

Mr. Bangs had persistently advocated the publication of a high-grade denominational magazine. John Dickins had published reprints of the first volumes of John Wesley's "Arminian Magazine" in 1789 and 1790. The Conference of 1796 authorized the publication of a monthly periodical to be called "The Methodist Magazine," declaring that the "propagation of religious knowledge by means of the press is next in importance to the preaching of the gospel." It, however, was not successfully attempted till 1818. Mr. Bangs repeatedly had thrown the fullness of his strength into an effort to force its publication. The General Conference of 1812, chiefly through his insistence, again ordered it published in monthly numbers. But this order was not heeded by the agents. Again in 1816, through his urgency, the order was repeated. The agents, Soule and Mason, found the Concern in such a deplorable financial condition that it was two years after their election before they were able to issue the first number, and then it could not be pronounced a success. The biographer of

Bishop Soule, Dr. B. F. Tefft, speaks of his editorship thus:

"Mr. Soule was not a literary man. Nor was he competent for the place of editor of a truly literary publication. The consequence was that in his hands the Methodist Magazine was scarcely worthy of being called a literary work. It was, in fact, religious rather than literary. Not only was the editor destitute of the genuine literary education, taste, and zeal, and thus incapable of giving tone to a purely literary publication, but there were at that time not a sufficient number of good English writers within the bounds of the denomination to supply its pages with matter of the true literary stamp. Great pulpit orators, of which we had an abundance, are very frequently the very weakest and poorest writers. The result was that, between the insufficiency of the editor and the almost total lack of competent contributors, the Magazine became rather a slim performance."

Mr. Bangs, however, gives a more cheerful view of Mr. Soule's work. He says: "The appearance of this periodical, filled as it was with useful matter, was generally hailed with delight by the members

of our Church as the harbinger of brighter days."

But when he took the office Mr. Bangs found a far more herculean task than he had anticipated. "When I went into the Concern I found it deeply in debt, with but slender means of its liquidation, the number of books published few and of dull sale, so that I greatly doubted the success of the establishment. My colleague, who kept the accounts, was a very energetic man, of good business habits, but not of enlarged views in respect to the manner of conducting the affairs of the Concern. We went to work as well as we could, though often much embarrassed for want of means to meet the demands against us, being forced to discount largely at the banks and borrow from other sources to enable us to carry forward the business."

Dr. McClintock, who was himself long connected with the Concern, writes of Dr. Bangs's work there: "When Dr. Bangs was made book agent, in 1820, the entire business was carried on in a small store in John Street. The Concern was deeply in debt, and yet its scale of operations was very small. The new agent went to work with his accustomed promptitude and en-

ergy. He boldly resolved 'to increase the debt' in order to pay it. New and costly works, such as Benson's Commentary, etc., were undertaken; a system of exchanges with other publishers was arranged; old stock was sold off at low prices, and new life was given to the movement of the business in all its branches. A bindery was added in 1822, and a printing office in 1824. In that year, too, the premises of the old Wesleyan Seminary, in Crosby Street, were purchased, and fitted up for the uses of the Concern at large expense. In 1824 Dr. Emory was associated with Dr. Bangs, and zealously seconded the energetic movements of the principal agent. A characteristic illustration of Dr. Bangs's fearless enterprise in carrying out plans approved by his judgment is furnished by the purchase in Crosby Street. There were croakers in abundance to predict evil; the proposed purchase was 'rash, reckless, unconstitutional,' and everything else but prudent and right. The agents used but one argument in reply—a practical one. They offered to make the purchase on their personal responsibility, agreeing, in case the General Conference should not sanction it, to take the entire establishment as their own.

The result justified the sagacity of the agents. Had they waited for a previous authority from the General Conference, we should probably have had no printing-house till now."

Dr. Stevens, who quotes this account with approval, adds: "No labor of his life except in the cause of missions has been attended with grander results."

CHAPTER IX

MISSIONARY SECRETARY

Of all the services which Dr. Bangs has rendered the Church there is none in which he stands so conspicuous and alone as in the origin and organization of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. There are many others who toiled with him, whom history would not willingly forget. There could not be a Michael Angelo without a multitude of inconspicuous laborers and masons and many gifted sculptors and painters; but the total of their work, the finished basilica, is the product of the genius of the peerless one. The historian will gratefully record the names of the fellow workers with Dr. Bangs, but their individual work is deeply shadowed in the towering creation of this one man, and cannot be easily traced.

All the historians of the society, before they begin their story, pause to do homage to the genius that designed it and the energy that executed it. W. P. Strickland in his History of the Missions of the Methodist

Episcopal Church unhesitatingly calls him "the Father of the Missionary Society of the Church." Dr. J. M. Reid echoes the words, and we know of no subsequent writer who questions the correctness of the characterization.

It is not to be supposed that Dr. Bangs foresaw the splendid outcome of what he did. He had himself been a missionary out on the frontiers of Michigan and in the deeps of Canadian Romanism. He was familiar with the immense sacrifices and personal sufferings of the pioneers of Methodism; and it became a matter of conscience with him to relieve these conditions and thus to further the gospel. For this he took counsel with his brethren and with his God. He could not shake off the sense of responsibility. Like Angelo, he felt that the hand of God was on him, and like him we may say he wrought larger than he dreamed.

"The hand that rounded Peter's dome,
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,
Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Himself from God he could not free;
He builded better than he knew:
The conscious stone to beauty grew."

To tell the story of Methodist missions would be to repeat the history of Methodism

itself. The Methodist Church is not only missionary in spirit, but for many years was itself a mission. Wesley came to this country under the impression that he was called to be a missionary, but afterward learned that his divinely appointed field was England. Some of the seed from the fruit he grew in his native land was wafted across the sea and ripened in New York and in Maryland. He heard a call from the man of America, "Come over and help us," and sent Boardman and Pilmoor.

All the Methodist preachers in the early history were missionaries, the sent of God to bear the message of redeeming love to those who sat in darkness. They were constantly on the move, going usually without purse or scrip. The few who had somewhat of this world's goods were almost sure to "gain the loss" of it in the presence of the desperate need they sought to relieve. They paused to rescue the wounded whom the priests of the established churches passed by on this side and that. Such Samaritanism kept them poor. They went forth under a sense of divine command, a "woe is me if I preach not the gospel," fearlessly braving appalling perils and deadly opposition. They pushed their way through for-

ests and swamps, over mountain heights and rushing torrents, "in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness," seeking the lost far out on the borders of our civilization, to be greeted often by curses of savage men and the growl of less savage dogs which were hissed after them.

The average man could not understand the sublimity of this hero-life

> "Which thinks what others dream about,
> And does what others think, and *glories in*
> What others dare but do."

It is no wonder that many of the first itinerants were early broken and compelled, as Dr. Bangs thought, too soon and needlessly to retire from their work. He himself was twice prostrated by the hardships of his evangelistic toil, and carried in his body "the scars of the Lord Jesus" to the end of his life. He makes the startling statement that the early Conference Minutes reveal the fact that nearly half of the itinerants died before they were thirty years of age, and less than one third of them were able to remain more than twelve years in the effective ranks. Of the six hundred and fifty whose names are recorded in those

early Minutes, nearly five hundred were compelled to locate for want of support.

There had been frequent efforts to relieve this condition and thus extend the gospel still further in the country. The General Conference had voted that a portion of the profits of the sale of books should be devoted to the relief of preachers on the distant fields, and organizations had been formed in Boston and Philadelphia with this object in view. But the profits of the book sales were far from adequate, and the societies that existed were never more than local organizations.

In the meanwhile the entire Church had been greatly moved by news of the wonderful triumphs of the gospel among the Wyandot Indians on the Upper Sandusky, through the testimony of a colored man who had recently experienced the joy of a great salvation. A young merchant of New York, Gabriel P. Disosway by name, was deeply stirred by the story, and, knowing Dr. Bangs's interest in mission work, pleaded with him for the organization of a society in New York city.

The Doctor conferred with Joshua Soule and Laban Clark, and together they agreed that if such a society should be formed it

should be a Disciplinary organization under the government of the General Conference. They brought the matter before the preachers of the city, and, notwithstanding considerable opposition, it was voted to form a society. Freeborn Garrettson, Nathan Bangs, and Laban Clark were appointed a committee to draft a constitution. The committee agreed that each member should prepare a constitution and present the three to the preachers for selection.

At a meeting held April 5, 1819, at which Dr. Bangs presided, his draft was selected. This has been modified from time to time, but its fundamental features remain, indicating the constructive ability and far vision of its author. At the first meeting of the board of managers he was elected chairman, and was ordered to prepare an address and circular. Thus the first official documents issued by the society for the public came from his pen. For twenty years thereafter he was the author of all its annual reports, from which the historian of the society must gather his material.

It is not the purpose of a biographical sketch to record the history of this society; but the man is so closely identified with his work that in unrolling the scroll of his

personal life this temple rises before our eyes in majestic outline. The Doctor's appeal was met with a generous and immediate response by the Church. From Dr. J. M. Reid's researches we gather the facts that the Baltimore Conference immediately indorsed the plan and organized an auxiliary. The Virginia Conference followed the lead of the Baltimore. Genesee Conference fell promptly into line, and the domestic missionary society that for some time had existed in Boston reorganized and became an auxiliary.

The General Conference in the city of Baltimore in the following spring, 1820, adopted with some emendations the constitution and wrought it into the organic structure of the Church. From that time till 1836 Dr. Bangs filled the offices of corresponding secretary and treasurer without salary or compensation of any kind. In addition to the reports he wrote many articles for the periodicals and traveled to and fro advocating the missions which the society fostered. He also published his History of Missions in the Methodist Episcopal Church, which is a record chiefly of cotemporary events, most of which occurred under his official supervision. For this

reason it is and must forever be a first authority for all students of the origins of Methodist missions.

By 1836 the society had grown to such proportions as to require the undivided energies of its chief officer, and the General Conference elected Dr. Bangs corresponding secretary, the first in a long line of mighty men famous in the history of the Church.

In an address made at the opening of the Mission House in Mulberry Street, New York city (1841), the Doctor reviews the story of the origin of the society, and then adds:

"It must not be thought that this work went on without opposition. Some whose piety was unquestionable looked on with cold indifference, while others opposed it as being an innovation upon Methodism and calculated to cripple the energies of the itinerancy. I remember well when the constitution was submitted to the General Conference in 1820, an influential member denounced it as a radical measure, originating with the North, calculated to act injuriously upon the institutions of the Church, and to impede its career of usefulness. I merely mention these things to show how

the most benevolent efforts may be misinterpreted, their objects maligned, and the actions of wise and good men misunderstood, even by those of whose integrity we have no reason to doubt. These things, however, so far from damping the zeal of its friends, only tended to excite it to greater ardor, until, finally, all objections and all these obstacles were silenced and overcome.

"Notwithstanding its favorable reception generally, at its first anniversary, in 1820, the amount which had been received was only $823.04; and the amount expended, $85.76. The next year there were reported, $2,328.76; and expended, $407.87. Indeed, it seemed to be more difficult to expend than to collect, though the collections were sufficiently small. So difficult was it to diffuse the missionary spirit among preachers and people, that our bishops seemed afraid to select and appoint missionaries, and to draw on the treasury, lest they should trespass upon the funds of the Church.

"I think I speak within the limits of truth when I say that more than sixty thousand souls have been brought to the knowledge of the truth by the labors of our missionaries."

The vast bulk of this missionary operation was within our own country, including all that kind of work that is now done by our home missionary society. It is almost incredible how great a mountain the little stone has become. If he who under divine guidance started that stone rolling can now, when clothed upon with immortality, look over this mountain range and hear those who till it proclaiming over three million dollars expended for missions in a single year, and over two hundred and fifty thousand native members of our Church in foreign lands, what rapturous "Hallelujahs" are rolling from his lips!

CHAPTER X

CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE

Dr. Bangs was never happier in his work than while in the office of missionary secretary. It was congenial to a spirit that never lost its evangelistic ardor, and one for which he was peculiarly qualified by his administrative gifts. It kept him in touch with his brethren on the battle line and gave him the opportunity of supplying their needs—a matter that had been on his heart ever since he came half starved and war-worn from his Canadian mission.

He was reëlected to the office in 1840, and gladly would have remained in its work. But Wesleyan University was seeking a president who could succeed the lamented Dr. Wilbur Fisk, who had died in 1839. Dr. Stephen Olin, who was then traveling in the Orient, had been elected, but on his return the following year found his health too feeble for him to assume the duties of the presidency, and resigned early in 1841. In the judgment of the electors the best available man in the Church for the place

was Dr. Bangs. He had been a conspicuous champion for higher education, and, while he felt that he was better qualified to do the work of the missionary office, he reluctantly yielded to the advice of his counselors and accepted the presidency. He, however, was soon convinced that it was a mistake, and though sustained by the faculty, many of the students and alumni, he resigned at the close of the collegiate year.

His experience at that time, while of no historical moment, was one of the bitterest he was ever called to endure. He says: "I was thrown out of employment and had no means of support. I was afloat on a rough sea."

Another cloud that shadowed his years at this period was one of far more serious portent than the purely personal one we have related. The antislavery controversy had become intense and threatened to rend the Church and the nation. We have no disposition to revive the memory of the controversies of that stormy time, with their long train of woes; but our portraiture of this "maker of Methodism" is incomplete unless we state his attitude toward it and its effect on his personal history.

The Methodist Church from the beginning had made the strongest possible utterances against the institution of slavery. The Christmas Conference of 1784 voted, "We view it contrary to the law of God. . . . We therefore think it our most bounden duty to take immediately some effectual method to extirpate this abomination from among us." But the growth of the institution in the South, its permitted existence and its influence on the social and industrial life, had created a different opinion among many in the Church, and with it a different conscience. The resistance to the ancient conscience only intensified it. The two parties rapidly became sectional, and the controversy that resulted was the most violent that ever convulsed the Church. In the controversy there arose a third party, a party of compromise.

It is a remarkable fact that Dr. Bangs, who was so very aggressive and warrior-like on so many other matters relating to the moral attitude of the Church, and who would fearlessly antagonize even the memory of Asbury, whom he revered, when it stood in the way of the advance of what he believed to be right, should in this combat take his stand with the compromisers. But

most of the older men were with him: Soule from Maine, Hedding from Vermont, and Fisk from Wesleyan University had carried that banner of peace. Even Asbury and Coke, before the unavoidable difficulties of the question, had receded from their first position and confessed that it was expedient to compromise with their opponents.

He explains his attitude by stating that he dreaded the impending agitation, foreseeing the possible rupture of the Church; and it was his conviction that the Church was itself an antislavery organization and that the spiritual principle, if left undisturbed, would right the personal and public distress which the curse of slavery had occasioned, and finally would extirpate the thing itself.

Dr. Stevens defends his position, viewing the whole agitation as a sad strife in which the movers were the aggressors and both wrong; by which churches were disturbed and broken up, and in which moderatism was the great merit. On the other hand, the antislavery agitators, among whom was the redoubtable McClintock, contended that the movers were right; that with a high unsilenceable moral purpose they assailed an evil which the good of humanity required

to be assailed; that there would have been but little strife if there had been, as there ought to have been, a reasonable concurrence instead of an unreasonable opposition; and that therefore the assailants of the movers were the responsible aggressors and the conservatives were the destructives.

The present generation, remote from the struggles and passions of those days, looking back over the perspective of seventy years, can clearly see what was not so clear when the atmosphere was thick with the smoke of battle. Dr. McClintock was right and Dr. Bangs was in error. He failed to rise to his usual high level of judgment and courage in this moral crisis, and with many another great man found the sun of his glory eclipsed. His is another instance of what we have often observed in history, a strong man weakened by the excess of his strength. The peculiarity of his strength was his love of Methodism. Next to his love of God, his passion was for his Church. It grew out of his experience. He had come into the life divine through Methodism when other religious systems had only tightened his bonds. Because of his very environment, he had been compelled to defend its doctrine and polity with voice

and pen, and wrestled with opposing athletes until his argumentative muscles stood out in bold exaggeration like those of Angelo's saints. Next to God, Methodism was the supreme thing, the very best expression of the kingdom of God in human history. With him Methodism and Christianity were all but synonymous terms. Whatever threatened in the least degree to disturb the full harmony of the Methodist Episcopal Church seemed to him from that fact alone to be necessarily and essentially wrong. Such was his obsession, which in some measure may explain the weak attitude of a strong man. Even in his error his foes acknowledged his strength.

Dr. McClintock wrote of him in that conflict: "He was full ready for the battle, could say unsparing things, and could employ what seemed to his opponents very questionable tactics. Like Dr. Johnson, if his argumentative pistol missed fire, he could knock the recusant down with the butt end. He had great ends in view, was autocratic in their pursuit, and repressed opposition in an unceremonious style. Even while he stood in our Conference uttering those words that fell like icicles on the heart of the Church, to be applauded to the echo

in Louisiana, she rejected his counsels with sorrow for their import, yet reverence for their utterer. To the last when he came into the arena he maintained the ascendency. To the last the antislavery progressives, most of them comparatively young and inexperienced, dreaded his speech and tactics more than all the others put together."

The effect of his position on himself was in many ways disastrous. It created many personal hostilities. In 1838 he was cited to trial before his Conference for public misconduct toward one of his brethren in the course of the controversy. The charges were not sustained, but opinion was divided and he suffered a loss of prestige. He writes: "God enabled me to vindicate my conduct against these charges in a manner perfectly satisfactory to myself, and I think also to my friends, as well as to the confusion of my adversaries. The motive of my accuser I leave to himself and to the Judge of all, hoping he may find acceptance in that day which shall disclose the secrets of all hearts."

Sad as were the personal hostilities which his compromising policy evoked, they were as nothing compared to the effect on himself. When the crisis which he had vainly

sought to avoid by a policy of conciliation finally came, he found himself rolling between two grinding millstones. He was in policy against one party and in conscience against the other and in favor with neither. At the General Conference of 1844, when the bravest knights of North and South were rushing to the conflict that ended in the division of the Church, this warrior, distinguished in many a notable fray and regarded as among the invincibles, was stripped of the attributes of leadership. In former days his unquestioning confidence in his own convictions, which extorted the confidence of others, his power of initiative, his force of will, his bold self-assertion in doubtful situations, his alertness in directing parliamentary movements, made him masterful. Now he had nothing to do but to remain silent and vote against the party he had conciliated.

After that Conference much of his prestige was gone. Many especially among the younger men declined to follow his leadership. Even the Christian Advocate threw the weight of its influence against him, and in 1848 he who had been a member of every delegated General Conference from the beginning failed of an election. In 1852

he writes: "Four years ago a strong current of prejudice was set in motion against me in one of our papers, because of my views on subjects connected with the late division of the Church, and with the editorial course of that paper. I was, therefore, left out of the delegation to the General Conference at that time. This, however, never gave me a moment's uneasiness."

Other sorrows came to him in rapid succession. He wept over the graves of two of his gifted sons and that of a beloved daughter. Many of the comrades of his early years were passing away and a new generation was pressing to the fore. But in all these sorrows there was much of sunshine. His brethren recognized his genuine manhood and his profound spirituality. The General Conference of 1848, of which he was not a member, appointed him to bear fraternal greetings to the Methodist Church in Canada, which he did with noticeable credit to the Church and his own great joy.

He returned to the pastorate and found great satisfaction in it, though its duties were very unlike those of his earlier years before his assumption of the official work of the Church. Especially did he enjoy the presiding eldership, for which he was

particularly qualified. He believed himself called to devote much of his strength to the dissemination of the doctrine of entire sanctification. It was the frequent theme of his discourses. He delighted in writing upon the subject, and presided over a weekly assembly in New York city held for the purpose of its consideration. More and more his own religious life became joyful and triumphant. His journal in later years abounds in rapturous ejaculations. "Hallelujah" and "Glory to God" roll out from his pen like music from a Hebrew harp touched by fingers that have not lost their Methodist cunning.

CHAPTER XI

THE HOLY OF HOLIES

No presentation of the place Dr. Bangs holds among the makers of Methodism is complete without a statement of his relation to the doctrine of entire sanctification. He stood among his cotemporaries one of its most representative witnesses and strongest advocates. It was the frequent theme of his sermons, his conversations, and his literary contributions. By the might of that peculiar ascendency which stronger minds exert over those of weaker mold, he impressed upon receptive thousands the essential truth of the doctrine colored by his personality. There gathered under his leadership a company which, while not so denominated, really became a school of holiness as distinct as those of Begh, Ruysbroeck, or Tauler. They borrowed his expressions, imitated his manner, and cultivated his emotions and his introspective habit.

Were it not for his sterling common sense, which strongly forbade it, there easily would

have arisen within the Church a body out of sympathy with its usage, and threatening schism. That no such calamity occurred is due largely to his clear understanding of the Wesleyan statement of the doctrine, which is not to be confounded with the idiosyncrasies of its teachers. Life in nature, while preserving its essential identity, delights in an infinite variety of bloom. If you cut the petals of your roses to conform them to the one you have chosen for your ideal, you have reduced life to art. By the same practice in the spiritual realm the most vital thing becomes a fossil, truth is lost in dogma. We would therefore distinguish the truth as Dr. Bangs saw it from the mode in which it wrought itself out in his experience.

In our review of his history we have noted his relation to the doctrine in personal experience. We have seen him coming into the joy of it six months after he knew his sins forgiven by faith in Christ. We have seen how, in the blessing that came to him on his full consecration, the coal of fire was placed to his lips and he knew that he was commissioned to proclaim the Word of the Lord. We have scented the incense of the altar in the office and the salesroom, and

have noticed the inscription, "Holiness unto the Lord," written on the bells of his horses. We have seen how in the presence of multiplied duties he lost for a while the joy of his experience, and recovered it again by a slow and gradual process altogether unlike the sudden descent of fire which was his when it first came to him in the woods of Canada. We have seen him presiding over a weekly meeting in the city of New York which was organized especially for the promotion of holiness, and have been impressed with the effect of that meeting on the men and women who frequented it. We have noticed his own heart growing richer and broader in its sympathies as the years advanced, and as he nears the end we find him exultant and even ecstatic.

All this we have noted. But we have not ventured into his Holy of Holies to study its contents. We have feared that our eye could not see what he looked upon. Pompey saw *nothing* behind the veil in Israel's temple; yet that place, empty to eyes such as his, was filled with a Presence more real than any visible image. Knowing how rare is the gift of perspicacity, we have feared lest we might read into Dr. Bangs's mind our own thought.

No one, however, who is familiar with his copious writings on the subject can doubt that his view is in substantial accord with the best thought of the entire Christian Church, and expressed generally in the language of the accepted Wesleyan standards.

The work of God in a sinner's recovery is twofold: a work wrought *for* him in the cross of Christ, by which he receives the pardon of his sins; and a work wrought *in* him by the Holy Spirit, by which his heart is renewed in the righteousness of Christ. The one is his by a faith that follows repentance; the other is his by a faith that accompanies a full consecration. The one is a finished work; the other is continuous and progressive. The doctor nowhere teaches a perfection of inerrancy nor a sudden maturity, but constantly asserts that man while in mortal flesh can no more attain Adamic than angelic perfection. He delighted in the expression "perfect love," though he was no stickler for any particular terms. He wrote: "But why should I dispute about words so long as the substance is retained? I care not by what name this great blessing be designated, whether holiness, sanctification, perfect love, Christian perfec-

tion, so long as is meant by it an entire consecration of soul and body to God, accompanied with faith that he accepts the sacrifice through the merits of Christ alone."

"Perfect love" especially pleased him, partly because he found abundant scriptural warrant for its use; partly because the men who had given him his ideal, Wesley, Fletcher, Fénelon, and others, used it; and partly because the words accurately described the essence of the experience. Love kindled in the believer's heart by the Holy Spirit is a perfect thing, just as life in the plant is perfect in every stage of its growth from the germinating bulb on to its ultimate bloom.

While it is true that Dr. Bangs's view did not differ in its root elements from the standards of the universal Church, yet his teaching was differentiated from theirs in that, like Wesley, he sought to bring out the truth from the realm of dogma into practical life. He insisted that what most Christians held as an opinion and a few enjoyed as an experience was the privilege and duty of all. He combatted the prevalent idea that men are to come into this life by a slow and labored process of holy liv-

ing, but that we may spring at once into the regal position by a single act of faith. Christ is enthroned within by faith, and our holiness is not the occasion but the result of his indwelling. We, like Chalmers, cry, "I do, not in order that I may live, but I live and so I do." "I live," said Paul, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

He found a ready hearing. The healthful tone of his mind, the purity of his conduct, the wideness of his usefulness, and the strength of conviction that accompanied his utterance were even more winning than his argument. He writes: "When I went on the district I felt it my duty to urge upon all, both preachers and people, the necessity of entire sanctification of soul and body. In explaining and enforcing this doctrine I enjoyed great enlargement of heart and much divine consolation, and God has raised up a number of witnesses of the doctrine."

It is not surprising that at the weekly holiness meetings which were held in the home of Mrs. Phœbe Palmer, in New York city, he became the recognized leader. Many outside of Methodist circles from various Christian denominations gathered there and under the magnetism of his com-

manding personality were guided into the experience of "perfect love." Multitudes of sincere men and women whose religious life had been but little better than a laborious legalism at that meeting came into the liberty of the Spirit and went out with a joyful testimony.

Those who are familiar with the great spiritual movements in history would not expect that this recent revival of the "new and fuller life" would be unattended with evils. There arose cantish imitators, exaggerated professions, uncharitable insinuations, and false interpretations of Scripture which threatened to bring the holy thing in disrepute. The consummate leadership of Dr. Bangs is seen in the manner in which he met these evils. He was sure to make due allowance for the natural infirmities of sincere men, but did not hesitate to draw the edge of the knife across the foreign growth.

He relates an instance in his journal which so fully exhibits both his method and his spirit that we repeat the substance of it here:

"On the 10th inst. I attended a meeting for the promotion of holiness at Mrs. Palmer's. This I did in the spirit of self-sacrifice, as I felt it my duty to speak against

certain theories which have sometimes been broached there and elsewhere.

"I fully believe that we are both justified and sanctified by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that when so justified or sanctified the Holy Spirit sets his seal upon our hearts, and gives us an evidence that the work is done. But what is this faith by which the believer is sanctified? Mr. Wesley considered that the faith by which we are sanctified is inseparably connected with a divine evidence and conviction that the work is done; and hence the theory which teaches that we are to lay all upon the altar or surrender up our hearts to God by faith in Christ, and then believe that God has accepted or does accept the offering, without our having any evidence of the Holy Spirit that it is accepted, or having any change in our disposition, or any emotion of joy and peace, more than we had before, is not sound, is unscriptural, and anti-Wesleyan.

"To the assertion that the Holy Scriptures are our evidence I answer that the Holy Scriptures, though true and infallible, are not in themselves any evidence to *me* that I am either justified or sanctified; they simply declare who are sanctified, and

give marks or evidences of the work. For instance, Saint Paul says: 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Here peace with God is the evidence of my justification. Where shall I look for this peace? Not in the Scriptures, but in my own heart, and if I find it there I have a scriptural evidence that I am justified.

"But it is possible that I am deceived. How shall I detect deception? I answer, The Holy Scripture has furnished me with a test. Do I bring forth the fruits of the Spirit—'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance'? If these fruits 'be in me, and abound,' then I have a right to believe that I have that Holy Spirit that produces them. This test is given both to prove the truth of our sanctification and also to detect deception should there be any, for 'the tree is known by its fruits.'

"I therefore solemnly warned those who professed to believe that merely because they had laid all upon the altar, or had surrendered up their hearts to God, he had adopted them, without any evidence of the Holy Spirit that they were adopted, or any change in their disposition, or any emotion

of love and joy, to beware that they did not deceive themselves, as I greatly feared some had done; for if this be all that is required of us, namely, to believe that we are accepted before we have a witness that we are, it is to believe without evidence, and hence I fully believe that many have been deceived and are deceiving themselves daily."

CHAPTER XII

SUNSET

In the seventy-fifth year of his age the harvester and warrior hung his sickle and battle-ax on the wall and awaited the setting of the sun. The evening twilight lasted through nearly ten years. He and the wife of his youth were sheltered in the home of his eldest son in the city of New York, which had been the center of his activity through the greater part of his ministry. In that home the golden bells rang merrily in memory of their wedding day, and there in great peace they watched the melting away of the day.

His old age was ideal. His physical condition, which under the stress of grave responsibilities was very uncertain and sometimes threatening, began perceptibly to improve. Up to the last there was almost no discernible decay of his mental powers, and his spirit grew sweeter and mellower with the passing years. He writes: "I can think, read, pray, and preach with much more freedom than formerly. O the good-

ness of God to me! I find it essential to my health as well as beneficial to my spirits to take as much exercise in the open air as possible. Hence when I find my spirits flagging I lay down my pen or book and take a walk, by which my mind becomes buoyant, and I can then apply myself to mental labor with renewed vigor and satisfaction. But while this tends to invigorate the physical and mental man, the love of God filling the heart gives me a tranquillity and comfort far surpassing human language to express. Glory be to God!"

His ablest biographer, Dr. Abel Stevens, who knew him intimately, speaks of three things which especially impressed him in this period of his friend's life: his joyful optimism, his sympathetic touch with nature, and his broad catholicity. He says: "Morally he seems to return to the freshness, the very bloom, of youthful life. A cloud of affliction occasionally flits across the serene sky, but the prospect shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. We enter not upon the dreary winter of a failing and discontented life, but this concluding scene opens like the lengthening day and the increasing brightness of springtime, grows into the radiant and blooming sum-

mer, and ends in the rich fruitfulness and beauty of the still genial autumn."

Here are some of his reflections on nature which Dr. Stevens quotes from the original manuscript: "In the spring of this year, returning from a quarterly meeting at East Chester, I could not but be delighted with the beautiful landscapes along a portion of my route. Some of the fruit trees are in blossom, the forest trees are bursting into foliage, the meadows are carpeted with green and decked with the earliest flowers, the streams sing along their courses, and the rays of the sun stream through a transparent atmosphere; all presents a scene of surpassing beauty on which my eye gazed with exquisite delight, and I exclaimed, 'These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!'" He draws an inference which once might have seemed questionable to some of his stricter Methodist brethren. "While observing the flowers and blossoms I asked myself, Why is it that the Almighty Maker has expended so much skill in merely beautifying things, and things so evanescent as the flowers, which spring up in the morning and perish at evening? Surely beauty cannot be displeasing to him; and hence I infer that it cannot be wrong to

adorn and beautify our persons and homes." But he gives the legitimate inference its necessary qualification. "Nature herself is a safe example; everything is befitting, all rightly proportioned, all simple and yet perfect. How different the fashionable displays of men and women! Simplicity and modesty in dress are its best beauty."

Bishop E. O. Haven said of him: "In all my acquaintance I never saw an aged man more buoyant and hopeful. He steadily maintained that the present days were better than the former in almost every respect." It is as instructive as it is cheering to note the deepening and widening sympathy of this man who spent much of his strength in other days in combatting by voice and pen every form of doctrine and practice that did not line with Methodism. He said: "I have preached on the subject of love and union among Christians with great satisfaction, as this is a theme upon which I delight to dwell. I have indeed been a man of war all my days—have fought the Calvinists, the Protestant Episcopalians, and others, or rather have defended the Methodists when they have been assailed by those denominations, and I cannot repent of what I have thus done, as I have acted in the

fear of God, and have not willfully defended an error, however much I may have erred in judgment unconsciously. I have, however, long since laid aside my polemical armor, and now delight chiefly in proclaiming brotherly love."

He was not idle. He often preached for his brethren in the city, was ever present at the social meetings of the church, and rarely failed to attend the regular meetings of the Missionary Board. He frequently contributed to the Church periodicals articles rich with sterling sense and spiritual fervor; and several of his volumes were published during his superannuation.

He records a remarkable triumph over the fear of death: "I can now look upon death with pleasure, though I have been habitually in bondage to it most of my life, from, I suppose, a constitutional cause in part. I was always afraid of death, could not bear to look upon a dead body, and this fear continued with me even after I experienced religion, a fact which sometimes gave me much trouble, though whenever I thought of its cause I could account for it without attributing it to a lack of faith; for when I looked beyond the grave I could rejoice in hope of the glory of God. It was

simply in the contemplation of death, viewed as a mortal dissolution, that it appeared so appalling. I have often prayed to be delivered from this slavish fear, and I thank God that he has heard my prayer."

Nor did his fear return when he actually faced death. Bishop Janes, who preached the funeral discourse, gave a minute description of that event:

"His last illness was of six weeks and three days' duration. The greater part of the time his sufferings were acute. But his resignation and fortitude and patience never failed him. He was favored with the full possession of his mental faculties to the last. If there was any exception it was simply from lethargy which sometimes overcame him, but from which he was easily roused.

"His religious consolations during his illness were abundant, and at times his joys ecstatic. He remarked to a brother minister that he felt that his work was all done; he was only waiting for his Lord, and could rest till he came. To another minister he said:

"'The promised land, from Pisgah's top,
I now exult to see:
My hope is full, O glorious hope!
Of immortality.'

Then with emphasis repeated, 'I *now* exult to see.' Then again, 'I now *exult* to see.'

"One afternoon a friend, who spent much time with him and ministered to him in his sickness, entered his room. He exclaimed: 'O sister! what a manifestation I had yesterday afternoon! It was glorious. The presence of Jesus was in this room, and it was all light, and luminous.' The next time this friend called he referred to the circumstance again. Raising both hands, he exclaimed: 'It has lighted up the entire way to heaven.' At another time, speaking to the same person, he said: 'That glorious manifestation was unlike anything I ever expected to witness in heaven above or earth beneath. It has brightened up everything. My way is clear into heaven. What infinite condescension! Boundless mercy! Jesus is very precious, unspeakably precious!'

"He spoke to many others of this special revelation of the glory of God to him, and always seemed, when referring to it, to be filled with unutterable joy.

"Never were his intellectual faculties brighter, nor his spiritual sense clearer, than at this time when he was consciously approaching the end of his mortal life.

"During all this blessed experience he

was careful to ascribe his salvation to Christ. To one friend he quoted with tears of joy this verse:

"'O love, thou bottomless abyss,
My sins are swallowed up in thee!
Covered is my unrighteousness,
Nor spot of guilt remains on me,
While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries.'"

On the morning of May 4, 1862, his earthly day closed; the sun had set.

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